

The Garage

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AS WE GROW OLDER our minds become filled with the picture of the past. We replace dolls and guns with books and pencils, our teasing of the girl next door with our first date, but we never forget childhood.. As I think of the enjoyable times of the past, my mind takes me back to the center of those experiences. The garage I played in is old now, and badly in need of paint, but inside there are still some of the dusty, cobweb-covered playthings I entertained myself with in my youth: old curtains, drapes, rugs, and broken ladders. This garage was used for everything but a car.

The first thing I remember about the garage is a playhouse I and my friends made of it. Our miniature house was complete in every detail, even to an old, worn-out piano which had been given to us by a kind neighbor. We kept this house up as well as our parents kept their homes. But each summer our garage became something new and better, something that reflected experiences we had had. A travel agency, a doctor's office, a flowershop, a bookstore, or a theatre—all these had a special meaning to us. Then down came the swirling leaves of autumn, and the close of our playing season.

Of all the make-believes we had in the garage, I think the theatre made the most impression upon me. Almost everybody has at some time or the other had the desire to be an actor or actress. Broadway in all its splendor could not outdo us, so we thought. Our productions consisted mainly of the Ziegfield type, although once we did produce a three-act play. The stories or plots of our shows were written as we set the stage for the production. The props for the setting consisted of ladders, wooden boxes, and anything else we could find to use. Although the costumes were handmade and home-made, we took as much pride in them as if they were fashioned by experts, but they might become walls or table cloths in the next scene. The audiences must have liked our productions or else they would not have come back for other shows. We, of course, did not give Broadway any competition, but we enjoyed our theatre, for you see we were only thirteen and we played to an audience of six- and seven-year olds.

We loved our parents, but that garage was more a home to us than the house we lived in. Why? I did not know then, but I know now. "Home is where the heart is," and a child's heart is in his play. But responsibility and self-expression have something to do with the matter, too. The garage was ours, and we made it what it was to us: an expression of what we were and wanted to be.